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NEWS RELEASE

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Harrisonburg Police Offer Safety Tips For Holiday Travelers and Shoppers

With large numbers of shoppers in and about Harrisonburg retail centers and many residents and students traveling away from home during the holiday season, the Harrisonburg Police urge citizens to be extra vigilant about their safety and that of their property.

Community Resource Officer MPO Rachel Hammer says that at this time of year police officers typically respond to an increased number of larceny and burglary complaints.

“The police department has intensified its crime prevention efforts,” says Hammer, “but it is critical that citizens also take precautions to minimize their chances of becoming victims.”

HPD offers the following tips for increased safety:

TRAVELERS

- Take anything of value, especially small items, with you. (i.e., iPods, laptops, jewelry).
- Lock your apartments and private spaces when you leave home.
- Close and lock all windows and doors. Place a wooden dowel in the sliding glass door track (available at local hardware or home improvement stores.)
- Put a hold on your mail and newspaper deliveries while you are out of the area.
- If you leave your vehicle in the city or at your home or apartment complex, place all valuables out of site or secure them in the trunk and lock the doors. Try to leave your vehicle parked under a streetlight.
- If you have a bicycle, lock it inside your home or apartment or secure it to a bike rack.
- Write down the make, model and serial numbers for your valuables, take pictures of them, and store the information in a safe place.
- Encourage friends and neighbors to secure their areas, too.

(MORE)

- Put lights and a radio on timers that come on at different times to give the appearance that someone is at home.

SHOPPERS

- Don't leave purchased items visible in the car; put them in the trunk.
- When shopping at night use parking lots that have adequate lighting.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and move to and from your vehicle with confidence and "purpose".
- Have keys ready **before** getting to your car so you do not have to search for them while standing near it.
- Make sure purses and wallets are secure on your person at all times.
- Keep the cash you carry at a minimum or put it into different pockets so all is not lost if your purse or wallet is misplaced or stolen.
- Keep track of all credit cards and keep receipts to compare with your monthly statement.
- Report suspicious people or activity to law enforcement **immediately!**

For additional public safety information contact HPD's Officer Hammer at 540-437-2672 (rhammer@harrisonburgva.gov) or the JMU Police department at 540-568-6911 (www.jmu.edu/pubsafety).

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